Formal Writing Assignment

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| **Unit:**  Applies to entire curriculum |
| **Topic:**  Economic Problems |
| **Type of Writing:**  Formal |
| **Time Frame:**  4 weeks |
| **Plan:**   * Students will choose a famous economist. * They will then research and write a paper discussing the problems the economist was interested and their major contributions to economic thinking, followed by an analysis/critique. * Their writing will be assessed using a rubric. |
| **Materials:**  Famous Economist research assignment handout |

FAMOUS ECONOMIST

RESEARCH PAPER & SOIREE

(125 points)

*“He [an economist] must be mathematician, historian, statesman, philosopher—in some degree. He must understand symbols and speak in words. He must contemplate the particular in terms of the general, and touch abstract and concrete in the same flight of thought. He must study the present in the light of the past for the purposes of the future. No part of man’s nature or his institutions must lie entirely outside his regard. He must be purposeful and disinterested in a simultaneous mood; as aloof and incorruptible as an artist, yet sometimes as near the earth as a politician.” (*Keynes, *Essays in Biography)*

*"Most economists will see the development of economics as a sequence of problems thrown up either by the world, called the economy, or by tools, techniques, and theorizations. That is, most economists see economics as a problem solving activity and the history of economics as a sequence of problems posed, solved, re-described, and further re-posed and resolved."*

(E Roy Weintraub, Introduction, *Inside the Economist's Mind*)

**Introduction**

Economics is a dynamic social science, developing and responding to the changing world around us, and arising from different ideologies. New problems present themselves and economists develop theories and models, both to explain and to help solve the problems as they occur. New methodology and technology also give greater insight to the way the economy works. In order to understand how economics has evolved and how it is applied to a changing world, ***each student will be required to write an individual research paper*** on an important economist and then attend a soiree in character as their economist.

**Paper Requirements** (100 points)

* Submit paper to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)
* 5-7 typed pages, double spaced, 12 or 14 easy to read font.
* Include a title page, separate sections and headings for each of the following.
* Biography: One paragraph at most to introduce economist. The emphasis of your paper should be placed on their ideas, not facts about their lives. Include their major works and other economists who influenced their thinking. (5 points)
* Problem(s): What were the economic problems of the time? What was happening in the economy? How were economic policies of the day failing? What problem of theory or economic tools was your economist interested in investigating? (15 points)
* Contribution to Economic Thinking: Summary of basic philosophy or approach to economics. You must describe/develop/explain three of their most important contributions to economic thinking, their philosophy and approach to economic thinking, and/or any developments in economic methodology. ***Include two quotations of the economist***. (50 points)
* Analysis/Critique: This can include any of the following. How effectively did their contributions help solve the economic problems of their time? What might be alternative approaches to solving the problem? Has history proved the economist to be correct? What is true or not true? Give some examples from today that still apply. Do you agree or disagree with the economist? What would your economist think about a current event? Are there contradictions in their theory? etc. (20 points)
* Works Cited: You must have a minimum of three sources—only one may be an encyclopedia. *You must include internal citations.* Also one required source is *The Worldly Philosophers* by Robert Heilbroner or *New Ideas from Dead Economists* by Todd G. Buchholtz, except where noted. (5 points)
* Conventions: 5 points

**Economist Soiree** (25 points)

We will have a pot luck “soiree” (even though it’s during the day).

* Act in character as your economist. You should be able to introduce yourself and your background, discuss what was going on during your time period, explain your theories, and politely debate your ideas with the other economists. (15 points)
* Soiree Participation Sheet (10 points)
* Extra credit for dressing up as your economist and intellectually rigorous debate.

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Economist Research Paper

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| **Requirements** | **5** | **3** | **1** |
| Biographical Information  \_\_\_\_ / 5 points | * Appropriate length * Engages the reader with interesting facts and anecdotes that demonstrate the significance of the economist * Includes major writings * Explains influences of other thinkers | * May be too large or too little a portion of the paper * Few facts or anecdotes about the economist and/or little understanding of the significance of the economist’s life * Missing some major writings * Little explanation of major influences | * Minimal information on the economist in paper * Significance of economist is unclear * Missing major writings * Missing influences |
| Economic Problem  \_\_\_\_ / 15 points | * Demonstrates a clear understanding of problems/issues * Connections are made to the historical period of the time * Rich in explanations, examples and evidence | * Some problems/issues many not be addressed or demonstrates a partial understanding * Limited connection to historical period * Some explanations, examples and evidence | * Provides limited information on the problem or demonstrates little understanding of issues * No connection to historical period * Few explanations, examples or evidence |
| Contribution to Economic Thinking  \_\_\_\_ / 50 points | * Discusses in depth three major contributions and makes connection to economic problem * Philosophy/approach of economist is clear * Develops two quotations that are linked to contributions * Relevant, quality details support and help clarify contributions | * Some discussion of contributions, but more information is needed to “fill in the blanks” * Philosophy/approach is minimally addressed * Includes two quotations but they are not explained or occur out of context * Some details * More research would strengthen the paper | * Minimal discussion of contribution; information is limited or merely lists disconnected information * Does not address philosophy/approach * Details and support are vague or missing * Little evidence of research * Organizational problems make the discussion difficult to follow |

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| **Requirements** | **5** | **3** | **1** |
| Analysis/  Critique  \_\_\_\_ / 20 points | Strong evidence of at least ***two*** of the following:   * Demonstrates insight into the ideas of the economist * Evaluates the achievements of the economist * Raises questions or problems with the economist’s thinking * Offers a different perspective * Discusses implications or consequences * Applies economist’s ideas to a current problem | Some evidence of at least ***two*** or strong evidence of ***one*** of the following:   * Demonstrates insight into the ideas of the economist * Evaluates the achievements of the economist * Raises questions or problems with the economist’s thinking * Offers a different perspective * Discusses implications or consequences * Applies economist’s ideas to a current problem | Limited evidence of any of the following:   * Demonstrates insight into the ideas of the economist * Evaluates the achievements of the economist * Raises questions or problems with the economist’s thinking * Offers a different perspective * Discusses implications or consequences * Applies economist’s ideas to a current problem |
| Conventions  \_\_\_ / 5 points | * Uses section headings * Economic terms are used correctly. * Sentences are structured in a way that makes the meaning clear. * Spelling is essentially correct with minimal errors that interfere with reading. | * May not have headings * Some economic terms may be used in a confusing way. * Some sentences are confusing and the reader has to work to figure out meaning. * Some spelling mistakes which sometimes interfere with reading. | * No headings * Shows limited understanding of economic terms. * Sentences are rambling, incomplete, or awkward which makes comprehension difficult. * Spelling mistakes frequently interfere with reading. |
| Internal Citations & Works Cited  \_\_ / 5 points | * Internal citations are used where needed. * Citations follow proper format. * Works Cited include a minimum of five sources and follows proper format. * Heilbroner and Buchholtz are used where applicable. | * Internal citations are sometimes used where needed. * Citations do not follow proper format. * Works Cited has 2-3 sources and mostly follows proper format. * Heilbroner and Buchholtz are minimally used. | * No internal citations * No Works Cited * No reference to Heilbroner or Buchholtz |